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AID TO THE NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THE REQUEST FOR AID FOR THE NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE

MARCH 19, 1986.—Message and accompanying papers referred to the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and ordered to be printed

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To the Congress of the United States:

Since I transmitted my message to the Congress on February 25 requesting additional assistance for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, I have heard from many thoughtful Members of Congress, as well as from Latin American leaders and the leaders of the Nicaraguan democratic resistance. Many have raised the question of how the additional authority I have requested could be implemented so as to help persuade the Government of Nicaragua to engage in a serious effort to resolve the conflict in Central America through peaceful means.

I am determined to make every effort to protect our vital interests and achieve peace without further loss of life. That is why on February 10 I proposed simultaneous talks by the Government of Nicaragua—with their opposition and with the United States. That is why on February 25 I affirmed my commitment to direct the additional assistance I have requested toward a comprehensive and verifiable agreement among the countries of Central America, based on the Contadora Document of Objectives. And that is why on March 7 I appointed Ambassador Philip Habib as my special envoy for Central America.

On Sunday night, I described to the American people the threat to our security that confronts us in Central America. As I said then, we are still willing to pursue vigorously a diplomatic effort to achieve a lasting peace. Approval of my request for additional assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance does not mean that a military solution is inevitable. It is, however, essential that the Congress act now to approve this assistance if diplomacy is to have a chance. Accordingly, I am providing in this message a further explanation of how I will implement the authority I have requested.

If the Congress approves my request I will send my special envoy on an urgent mission to the capitals of the Contadora and Support Group nations. He will ask them to join with us in urging the Government of Nicaragua to initiate a national dialogue with representatives of all elements of the democratic opposition, designed to achieve the goals set out in the widely heralded proposal announced by six opposition Nicaraguan political parties on February 7, 1986. Their proposal, which has been endorsed by the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, calls for an immediate cease-fire, an effective general amnesty, abolition of the state of emergency, agreement on a new electoral process and general elections, effective fulfillment of international commitments for democratization, and observance of implementation by relevant international groups and bodies.

President Duarte's additional proposal for simultaneous dialogue with the Salvadoran guerrillas, a proposal endorsed by the democratic Presidents of Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala, rein-

forces the importance of an internal dialogue in Nicaragua to address the objectives of the six-party proposal of February 7.

In order to give the Government of Nicaragua every reasonable opportunity to respond favorably, and to provide an incentive for a positive response, I will limit the assistance to be provided to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance for 90 days following approval of my request to the following:

(1) humanitarian assistance, as defined in section 722(g) of P.L. 99-83, including support for programs and activities to strengthen respect for human rights;

(2) logistics advice and assistance;

(3) equipment and supplies necessary for defense against air attack;

(4) support for democratic political and diplomatic activities; and

(5) training in radio communications, collection and utilization of intelligence, logistics, and small-unit skills and tactics.

Following this 90-day period, additional types of assistance will be provided to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance only if—

(1) I have determined, after consultation with the Congress,

(a) that the Central American countries have not concluded a comprehensive agreement based on the Contadora Document of Objectives;

(b) the Government of Nicaragua is not engaged in a serious dialogue with representatives of all elements of the democratic opposition, accompanied by a cease-fire and an effective end to the existing constraints on freedom of speech, assembly, and religion; and

(c) there is no reasonable prospect of achieving these developments through further diplomatic measures, multilateral or bilateral, without additional assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance;

(2) I have reported my determination to the Congress; and

(3) Fifteen days have elapsed following my report to the Congress, during which the Congress may take such legislative or other action as it deems appropriate.

Should the conditions described in subparagraph (a) or (b) of paragraph (1) later be achieved, assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance will again be limited to the categories, described above, available during the intial 90 days following approval of my request, for so long as the Government of Nicaragua acts in good faith to maintain those conditions.

In order to keep the Congress fully and currently informed of developments relating to diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict during the 90 days following approval of my request, I will appoint a special bipartisan commission to report on negotiations, whose reports will be made available to the Congress. This commission shall be composed of individuals, none of whom shall be a Member or employee of the Congress or an officer or employee of the United States, recommended by the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate, with a fifth member of the commission to be recommended by the four other commissioners.

This approach represents a sincere effort to achieve peace through negotiations. In order to further this effort, I will make $2,000,000 of the funds I have requested for assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance available to the Central American democracies (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) to facilitate their participation in regional meetings and negotiations. In addition, I will encourage those countries and the Contadora and Support Group nations to make regular and public reports on the status of negotiations, the likelihood of achieving a comprehensive agreement, progress toward national reconciliation, and the obstacles thereto.

Moreover, the United States will assist all indigenous groups which are committed to work together for democratic national reconciliation in Nicaragua based on the six-party proposal. We will require only that they respect international standards of conduct, refraining from violations of human rights or other criminal acts, and that they work together toward this common goal.

In this regard, the democratic resistance has been broadening its representative base. The United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) now includes the largest of the Indian/Creole resistance groups (KISAN), and has forged cooperative relationships with other democratic resistance elements. The UNO has also engaged in constructive discussions with the Southern Opposition Bloc (BOS). And UNO has further strengthened unity by ensuring that all its military forces are responsive to its civilian leadership. We wholeheartedly support these developments and will encourage the democratic opposition to take further steps that will increase its unity and its appeal to the Nicaraguan people. Toward this end, I will reserve not less than $10,000,000 of the funds I have requested for assistance to resistance forces otherwise eligible and not currently included within UNO, one-half of which shall be for BOS and one-half shall be for the Indian resistance force Misurasata.

However, no group shall receive assistance from the United States if it retains in its ranks any individual who engages in—

(1) gross violations of human rights (including summary executions, torture, kidnapping, forced recruitment, or other such violations of the integrity of the person); or

(2) drug smuggling, or significant misuse of public or private funds.

There are two other issues, relating to funding, that I ask you to consider.

First, there has been inaccurate public speculation about what additional funds for assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance might be available beyond the $100 million for fiscal years 1986 and 1987 that I have requested be transferred from amounts already appropriated to the Department of Defense. I want to state unequivocally that I will not augment this $100 million through the use of CIA or any other funds that have not been approved by the Congress for this purpose.

Second, when I proposed to the Congress a Central America Democracy, Peace, and Development Initiative to implement the recommendations of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, I included Nicaragua among the countries that could benefit from this initiative. The Congress accepted my recommenda-

tion in enacting a new chapter of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The Congress also authorized in that Act, as the Bipartisan Commission recommended and I requested, the appropriation of the full $1,200,000,000 in nonmilitary assistance for Central America for fiscal years 1988 and 1989. However, the current authorization for fiscal year 1987 falls short of this goal. This, combined with appropriations shortfalls from previous years, is an obstacle to timely progress. I will ask the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to develop a plan to overcome the funding shortfalls that have occurred. In addition, I urge the Congress to provide the full amounts of economic assistance I have requested in my budget for fiscal year 1987 so that the necessary long-term commitment urged by the Bipartisan Commission will be fulfilled, and so that the promises of peace and freedom will be realized throughout Central America.

Upon the enactment of a joint resolution approving my request, I shall issue an Executive order to provide for the implementation of the undertakings I have expressed in this message and in my message of February 25. The Secretary of State, or his designee, will be responsible, under my direction, for policy guidance and coordination of United States Government activities under that Executive order.

In conclusion, I must stress that our diplomacy cannot succeed without the demonstrated resolve of the United States to protect its own interests and those of the brave men and women who are fighting for democracy in Central America. The time for decision is now. Your vote on my request will be a fateful one. I need and urge your support on this vital issue.

RONALD REAGAN.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 19, 1986.*

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